

AP-NORC poll finds an uptick in positive ratings of the U.S. economy

By JOSH BOAK and
EMILY SWANSON

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Stocks are near record highs. Growth was surprisingly strong last year. And once-hot inflation has begun to cool. But so far, U.S. adults are feeling only slightly better about the economy.

A new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research finds that 35% of U.S. adults call the national economy good. That's an uptick from 30% who said so late last year and up from 24% who said so a year ago. While 65% still call the economy poor, that's also an improvement from a year ago, when 76% called it poor.

Voters' confidence in the economy could be a pivotal factor in this year's presidential election as it is consistently rated as a top issue. Recent data on the economy has shown that growth accelerated last year even as inflation returned closer to the Federal Reserve's 2% target, proving wrong a multitude of Wall Street and academic economists who said a recession would be the consequence of efforts to lower inflation.



Customers shop for produce in the Chinatown neighborhood of Philadelphia, July 22, 2022.

Associated Press
Page 2

Continued on Page 2



For the BEST & the BIGGEST Steak
and so much more!

Lobby Bar Menu



FRIDAYS
2 FOR 1 Sangria

Lunch Special
EVERYDAY 11:30AM - 5PM



\$28.90 + 15% SC
TAX IS INCLUDED.

Local Deal
SATURDAY



15% OFF For Locals

Open daily from 11:30am - 11pm. Mondays Closed. Wilhelminastraat #80, Oranjestad, Aruba. Phone: +297 582-3677 • www.elgaucho-aruba.com

Pinchos Grill & Bar

Now in its 20th plus year, owned and run by a local family.

Open 7 days a week, as of 5:00PM
Full Service Bar
Live Music on weekends

Reservations: (297) 583 2666 or reservations@pinchosgrillaruba.com






AP-NORC poll finds an uptick in positive ratings of the U.S. economy



President Joe Biden speaks to members of the media before boarding Marine One on the South Lawn of the White House in Washington, Jan. 30, 2024.

Associated Press

Continued from Front

President Joe Biden and his aides have taken to highlighting the economic positives as consumer sentiment has rebounded. Biden is also drawing an open contrast with former President Donald Trump, the Republican front-runner. Trump supporters remember his tenure with pride for how the economy fared, but his term was marred by job losses tied to the coronavirus pandemic. The evidence of a stronger economy has yet to spill over into greater support for Biden. The new poll puts his approval rating at 38%, which is roughly where that number has stood for most of the past two years. Biden's approval rating on handling the economy is similar, at 35%. Respondents interviewed for the survey often expressed their views on the economy through a

personal lens. Some judged it based on their grocery bills and prices at the gasoline pump. Others assessed the economy based on their appreciating investments. Housing prices mattered, and so did job prospects for their adult children and the upward trajectory of the federal debt.

Molly Kapsner, 58, lives on a farm in Wisconsin and thinks the economy is doing "pretty well" because she has three children finishing college this year and all of them have job options. She voted for Biden in 2020 and plans to do so again.

"He has a lot on his plate right now and he's doing quite well," she said. "He's just putting his head down and doing his job and not trying to create a circus in our country."

David Veksler, who voted for the libertarian candidate, Jo Jorgenson, in 2020, said

he's worried about the rising federal debt. The 43-year-old software engineer manager from Denver said the borrowing will hurt growth in the long term, even if his investments are doing well now.

"I think he's similar to his predecessors in furthering unsustainable deficits," Veksler said of Biden. "I'm as negative on him as I was on Trump." Harry Broadnax, a 62-year-old retiree, said he increasingly thinks about the economy in relation to the increase in migrants illegally crossing the U.S. southern border. He feels their presence is diverting financial resources from U.S. citizens. "I would like to see them block up the border like Trump wanted," said Broadnax, who is from North Carolina, adding for emphasis, "I'm a Democrat."

Broadnax doesn't see himself voting for Biden or Trump, whose criminal indictments

worry him. The Biden administration has tried to put a greater focus on the big numbers used to assess the overall economy, making its case through hard data.

Lael Brainard, director of the White House National Economic Council, told a group of reporters last week that skeptics about the economy had overlooked how Biden's policies boosted the labor market and repaired supply chains wrecked by the pandemic.

"The big miss here was not to understand how much, by surging back into the workforce, by addressing supply chains that were completely broken, those inflationary pressures would come down," she said.

Trump has said that the economy is "fragile" and "running off the fumes of what we did." The Republican front-runner has said on social media that stocks are

rising because he is likely to return to the White House. That claim overlooks the influence of the Fed, as well as the fact that average annual growth has been higher under Biden so far than it was during Trump's term.

There continues to be a political split in how people think about the economy. As a consequence, there might be a limit on how much Biden's approval numbers can climb even if the economy keeps thriving as it did last year. Democrats remain far more likely than Republicans to describe the economy as good, 58% to 15%. Still, views have improved at least slightly since the same time last year, when 41% of Democrats and 8% of Republicans called the economy good. Sixty-five percent of Democrats, but just 7% of Republicans, say they approve of Biden's handling of the economy, both largely unchanged since late last year. However, the poll did show a brighter outlook on the economy from some key voter demographics. Since a year ago, a disproportionate increase in sentiment has come from college graduates and older adults — two groups that tend to turn out to vote at higher rates. There is also the possibility that voters will care more about the personalities of the Democratic and Republican nominees than they do about the state of the economy.

Deborah Shields, 70, who works in direct sales, said she's noticed an improvement in the economy as her investments have improved. Yet she said her opposition to Trump will determine her vote in November.

"I would never, never, ever vote for Trump," said Shields, who lives in Orlando, Florida. "He's a megalomaniac."

Richard Tunnell, an Air Force veteran on disability, voted for Trump in 2020 and would do so again if the former president is on the ballot. The 30-year-old from Huntsville, Texas is a hard "no" on Biden. "He's just a puppet," Tunnell said. "They'll boot people out like Trump who give a crap, but they'll put in people like Biden who they can put on strings and manipulate." □

Secret U.S. spying program targeted top Venezuelan officials, flouting international law

By JOSHUA GOODMAN and JIM MUSTIAN

Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — A secret memo obtained by The Associated Press details a yearslong covert operation by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration that sent undercover operatives into Venezuela to surreptitiously record and build drug-trafficking cases against the country's leadership — a plan the U.S. acknowledged from the start was arguably a violation of international law.

"It is necessary to conduct this operation unilaterally and without notifying Venezuelan officials," reads the 15-page 2018 memo expanding "Operation Money Badger," an investigation that authorities say targeted dozens of people, including Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro.

While there's no clear mechanism to hold the United States accountable legally, the revelation threatens to roil already fraught relations with Maduro's socialist government and could deepen resentment of the U.S. across Latin America over perceived meddling. It also offers a rare window into the lengths the DEA was willing to go to fight the drug war in a country that banned U.S. drug agents nearly two decades ago.

Some of Maduro's closest allies were ensnared in the investigation, including Alex Saab, the businessman recently freed in a prisoner swap for 10 Americans and a fugitive defense contractor. But until now, it was not clear that U.S. probes targeting Venezuela involved legally questionable tactics. "We don't like to say it publicly but we are, in fact, the police of the world," said Wes Tabor, a former DEA official who served as the agency's country attaché in Venezuela well before the investigation described in the memo was launched. Tabor, who would not confirm the existence of any such operations, said unilateral, covert actions can be an effective tool when



This June 13, 2016, file photo shows Drug Enforcement Administration agents in Florida.

Associated Press

conducted with proper limits and accountability, particularly in a country like Venezuela, where the blurred lines between the state and criminal underworld have made it an ideal transit point for up to 15% of the world's cocaine.

"We're not in the business of abiding by other countries' laws when these countries are rogue regimes and the lives of American children are at stake," he said. "And in the case of Venezuela, where they're flooding us with dope, it's worth the risk." The DEA and Justice Department declined to answer questions from the AP about the memo, how frequently the U.S. conducts unilateral activities and the makeup of the panel that approves such operations. Venezuela's communications ministry did not respond to requests for comment. But in recent days Maduro accused the DEA and the CIA — a regular target he uses to rally supporters — of undertaking efforts to destabilize the country. The CIA declined to comment.

"I don't think President Biden is involved," Maduro said in a televised appearance this month. "But the CIA and the DEA operate independently as imperialist criminal organizations."

TARGETING MADURO

The never-before-seen document was authored at the cusp of Republican President Donald Trump's "maximum pressure" campaign to remove the Venezuelan president.

Maduro had just taken an authoritarian turn, prevailing in what the Trump administration decried as a sham re-election in 2018. Within weeks, senior DEA officials plotted to deploy at least three undercover informants to surreptitiously record top officials suspected of converting Venezuela into a narco state.

But because the plan appeared to run roughshod over Venezuelan and international law, it required the approval of what is known as the Sensitive Activity Review Committee, or SARC, a secretive panel of senior State and Justice Department officials that is reserved for the most sensitive DEA cases involving tricky ethical, legal or foreign policy considerations. It marked an aggressive expansion of "Money Badger," which the DEA and prosecutors in Miami created in 2013 and would go on to investigate around 100 Venezuelan insiders, according to two people familiar with the operation who spoke on the condition of anonymity

to discuss law enforcement details.

By authorizing otherwise illicit wire transfers through U.S.-based front companies and bank accounts, the DEA aimed to unmask the Colombian drug traffickers and corrupt officials leveraging Venezuela's tightly controlled foreign currency exchange system to launder ill-gotten gains. But it expanded over time, homing in on Maduro's family and top allies, although the president would end up being indicted elsewhere, by the U.S. Attorney's Office in Manhattan, on drug trafficking charges.

None of the indictments of Venezuelans either before or after the 2018 memo made any mention of U.S. spying. And "to limit or mitigate the exposure of the unilateral activities," the document advised DEA officials to protect their informants and curtail in-person meetings with targets.

Since Democratic President Joe Biden took office in 2021, his administration has rolled back sanctions and brought few new prosecutions of Maduro insiders as the Justice Department's attention has turned to Russia, China and the Middle East. The Biden administration has also sought to lure Maduro back into negotia-

tions with the U.S.-backed opposition, threatening to re-impose crippling oil sanctions if the OPEC nation doesn't abide by an agreement to hold fair and free elections this year.

The operation targeting Maduro's inner circle is not the first time the United States has conducted law enforcement operations overseas without notifying a host country.

In 1998, Mexico castigated the United States for keeping it in the dark about a three-year money laundering sting known as "Operation Casablanca" — partly conducted on Mexican soil — that implicated some 160 people, including several bank executives.

Notably, legal experts say no international court or tribunal has jurisdiction to hold the United States or its agents accountable for covert law enforcement actions in other countries, and the U.S. Supreme Court has upheld arrests and evidence collected on such missions.

Evan Criddle, a law professor at William & Mary in Virginia, said international law forbids undercover operations such as those described in the memo that take place in another country's territory without consent. He expects the release of the memo to "cause some embarrassment to the United States, prompt Venezuelan diplomats to register their objections and potentially inhibit future cooperation."

Several current and former DEA officials who examined the memo told the AP they were surprised less by the brazenness of the plan than the agency's acknowledgement of it in internal documents.

"It's very rarely done simply because there's always that potential of it blowing up in the U.S. government's face," said Mike Vigil, the DEA's former chief of international operations. "But Venezuela had already become a rogue state. I think they figured they had nothing to lose." □

An armed man found dead at an amusement park researched mass shootings

By COLLEEN SLEVIN
Associated Press

DENVER (AP) — A heavily armed man who was found dead at a Colorado mountaintop amusement park last year had researched mass shootings online, but investigators haven't determined why he amassed such an arsenal or didn't follow through on "whatever he was planning," authorities said Thursday.

The body of Diego Barajas Medina, who died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound, was found in a bathroom at the Glenwood Caverns Adventure Park on the morning of Oct. 28 in a building that houses a ride that drops 110-feet deep into caverns. His body was surrounded by alcohol and weapons, according to a previously released 911 call. The words "I'm not a killer. I just wanted to get in the cave" were written neatly on the bathroom wall.

The discovery led to the belief that Medina, who



This image provided by the Garfield County, Colo., Sheriff's Office shows tactical clothing and weapon belonging to Diego Barajas-Medina, a heavily armed man found dead at a Colorado mountaintop amusement park last year.

entered the park when it was closed, could have been planning to launch a deadly attack at the attraction located above the Colorado River in western Colorado. But three months

later, his intentions remain a mystery. The Garfield County Sheriff's Office said in a written update on its investigation that it was "unable to uncover any motive for Diego

amassing such a lethal arsenal nor did it explain what happened to change his mind and why he did not follow through with whatever he was planning." Despite the 911 call's de-

scription, no alcohol or illegal drugs were found in his system and there was no evidence that he had been working with others or was a member of an extremist group, the sheriff's office said. He also didn't have a criminal record or any known ties to the park. Friends, family and school officials described Medina as "a bit of loner," it said.

"In the end, Diego took his own life in the women's restroom at the Amusement Park for reasons known only to him," it said.

Medina's family has never spoken publicly about what happened. His brother didn't immediately respond to an email seeking comment and a person who answered his phone hung up when reached by The Associated Press.

Medina, who lived with his mother and brother, was dressed in black tactical clothing with patches and emblems that made it look like he had law enforcement links. □

Associated Press

Firm announces \$25M settlement over role in Flint, Michigan, lead-tainted water crisis

FLINT, Mich. (AP) — A second contractor said Thursday that it has reached a \$25 million settlement over its role in Flint, Michigan's lead-contaminated water scandal that officials say caused learning disabilities in scores of children and other medical problems among adults in the majority Black city.

The class-action litigation agreement includes payments of \$1,500 for individual minors, according to Boston-based Veolia North America. The company says the agreement will resolve claims made on behalf of more than 45,000 Flint residents.

In July, the engineering firm Lockwood, Andrews & Newman said in a court filing that a confidential deal was reached with residents in federal court. Like Veolia

North America, Lockwood, Andrews & Newman had been accused of being partially responsible for the water crisis in the city about 60 miles (95 kilometers) northwest of Detroit.



R-Mon Ford, 23 of Flint, puts freshly filled five-gallon jugs of water into his mother L'Tonya Payne's trunk on the eve of the seventh anniversary of the Flint water crisis during a water distribution on Saturday, April 24, 2021 at the Latinx Technology & Community Center in Flint, Mich.

Associated Press

Flint, which was under state-appointed managers, used the Flint River for water in 2014-15, but the water wasn't treated the same as water previously supplied by a Detroit-area

provider. As a result, lead leached throughout the vast pipe system.

The state was sued because environmental regulators and other officials missed opportunities to fix Flint's water problems during the lead crisis. Flint returned to a regional water supplier in the fall of 2015. Doctors later would find high levels of lead in the blood of some children in Flint. Flint families sued Veolia North America and Lockwood, Andrews & Newman, accusing both firms of not doing enough to get Flint to treat the highly corrosive water or to urge a return to a regional water supplier.

Veolia North America had faced a trial this month in federal court, but that has been suspended pending final approval of its settle-

ment agreement, the company said.

The issues for a jury would have included whether Veolia North America breached care and, if so, whether that breach prolonged the crisis. The company has said it was hired by the city to conduct a one-week assessment 10 months after Flint switched to Flint River water.

"VNA made good recommendations, including a crucial one on corrosion control, that would have helped the city had those recommendations not been almost entirely ignored by the responsible government officials," the company said Thursday in a release.

"VNA had no power over these decisions. VNA never operated the Flint Water Plant." □

U.S. hints large response to Iran-backed militias is imminent as Houthi rebels target another ship

By TARA COPP, LOLITA C. BALDOR and JON GAMBRELL

Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said Thursday it's time to further disable Iran-backed militias that have struck at U.S. forces and ships in the Middle East and the U.S. is preparing to take significant action in response to the deaths of three U.S. service members in Jordan.

For days the U.S. has hinted strikes are imminent. While the threat of retaliation for Sunday's deaths has driven some militant groups to say they were stopping hostilities, as late as Thursday Yemen's Houthi rebels were still attacking vessels and fired a ballistic missile at a Liberian-flagged container ship in the Red Sea.

"At this point, it's time to take away even more capability than we've taken in the past," Austin said Thursday in his first press conference since he was hospitalized on Jan. 1 due to complications from prostate cancer treatment.

Previous U.S. strikes have not deterred the attacks. Since the war between Is-



Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin speaks during a Pentagon press briefing at the Pentagon on Thursday, Feb. 1, 2024 in Washington.

Associated Press

rael and Hamas broke out in October, Iranian-backed militant groups have struck U.S. bases in Iraq and Syria at least 166 times with rockets, missiles and one-way attack drones, drawing about a half-dozen U.S. counterstrikes on militant facilities in both countries. The U.S. military also has carried out airstrikes targeting the Iran-backed Houthi

rebels in Yemen.

The U.S. has attributed the attack on Tower 22 in Jordan to the Islamic Resistance in Iraq, an umbrella group of Iran-backed militias that includes the militant group Kataib Hezbollah.

While Iran has denied involvement, Austin said Thursday that "how much Iran knew or didn't know,

we don't know. But it really doesn't matter because Iran sponsors these groups." Austin said "without that facilitation, these kinds of things don't happen." He said the Pentagon is still looking at the forensics of the drone that struck Tower 22, a secretive base in northeastern Jordan that's been crucial to the American presence in neighbor-

ing Syria.

"I don't think the adversaries are of a 'one and done' mindset. And so they have a lot of capability. I have a lot more," Austin said. "We're going to do what's necessary to protect our troops."

In the Red Sea, the Houthis have fired on commercial and military ships almost 40 times since November. In the latest attack, they fired a ballistic missile at a Liberian-flagged container ship on Thursday, U.S. defense officials said.

The attack happened west of Hodeida, a port city in Yemen long held by the rebels, said the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations, a British military group overseeing Mideast waterways. It said the crew and the vessel were safe and the blast came far off the vessel's starboard side. The U.S. defense officials identified the targeted container ship as the Koi, a Bermuda-owned vessel. Its management could not be immediately reached for comment. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss intelligence matters. □

Gunmen take hostages at U.S. company's Turkish factory in apparent protest of Gaza war

By ANDREW WILKS

Associated Press

ISTANBUL (AP) — Two gunmen took seven hostages at a factory owned by U.S. company Procter & Gamble in northwest Turkey on Thursday, according to media reports, apparently in protest of the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza.

Turkish media published an image of one of the purported suspects inside the factory, a man wearing what appeared to be a rudimentary explosives belt and holding a handgun.

Private news agency DHA said the suspects entered the main building of the facility in Gebze in the province of Kocaeli, at around 3

p.m. local time (1200 GMT) and took seven members of the staff hostage.

It claimed the suspects' actions were to highlight the loss of life in the Palestinian enclave. Some 27,000 have been killed in Israel's military operation since Oct. 7, according to the Hamas-controlled Health Ministry. Ismet Zihni said his wife Suheyra was among the hostages. Speaking from near the factory, he told DHA that he had called her. "She answered 'We've been taken hostage, we're fine' and she hung up," he said.

Police sealed off surrounding roads at the factory and were said to be trying

to negotiate with the hostage-takers.

P&G's head office in Cincinnati confirmed an ongoing incident. A spokesperson said: "The safety of P&G people and our partners is our top priority. Earlier today, we evacuated our Gebze facility and are working with local authorities to resolve an urgent security situation."

P&G Turkey employs 700 people at three sites in Istanbul and Kocaeli, according to the company's website. It produces cleaning and hygiene brands such as Ariel washing powder and Oral B toothpaste. Public feeling against Israel and its main ally the U.S.

has risen in Turkey since the conflict began, with regular protests in support of the

Palestinian people in major cities and calls for an immediate cease-fire. □



Police officers cordon off the area outside the Procter & Gamble factory near Gebze, northwest Turkey, Thursday, Feb. 1, 2024.

Associated Press

Mexican president suggests U.S. talks on migration and drugs may suffer after drug money allegations

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Mexico's president suggested Thursday that talks with the U.S. government on migration and drug trafficking could suffer after media reports of a U.S. investigation into alleged drug money donations for his 2006 campaign.

President Andrés Manuel López Obrador suggested U.S. officials should apologize for what he called baseless allegations, and said it would be hard to sit down and talk about some of the most pressing issues in bilateral relations until that happens.

"I don't accept this, what I want is for the U.S. government to take a stand," López Obrador said at his daily morning press briefing. "If they have no proof, they have to apologize."

"President (Joe) Biden has to find out about this," López Obrador said. "How are we going to sit down at a table and talk about fighting drugs if one of their agencies is leaking information and damaging me? How are we going to talk about migration, how are we going to talk about fighting drugs or fentanyl?"



President Joe Biden meets with Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperative summit, Nov. 17, 2023, in San Francisco.

Associated Press

The Biden administration has relied for some time on Mexico's willingness to accept the return of migrants from third countries as a way of quickly returning migrants and asylum seekers at the U.S. southwest border.

It would be a political problem for Biden if Mexico refuses to continue doing so, or loosens up on its already

weak efforts to control the flow of deadly opioids made in Mexico and smuggled into the United States. López Obrador who pointedly called former president Donald Trump "my friend" later in the briefing did not specify who he wanted to apologize, but suggested that the U.S. State Department should say something.

"Don't the state department, the justice department, have any information?" he said, calling the media reports "interventionism" in Mexico's domestic affairs.

López Obrador has denied old allegations that drug traffickers may have given about \$2 million to his first, failed bid for the presidency he lost in 2012 and final-

ly won in 2018 and called the reports a U.S. attack on his government and his Morena party before Mexico's June 2 presidential election.

Claudia Sheinbaum, the presidential candidate for López Obrador's Morena party, holds a commanding lead in opinion polls for the June 2 election. But Mexico's continued high rates of violence and Sheinbaum's pledge to continue López Obrador's policy of not confronting drug cartels are one of the governing party's most vulnerable flanks.

According to reports by ProPublica, Insight Crime and Germany's Deutsche Welle, in 2010 the DEA investigated claims by a cooperating drug trafficker and a former campaign adviser that leaders of the Beltrán Leyva drug cartel gave the money to close confidants of López Obrador in 2006. But a wiretap of a conversation between the DEA informants and one of López Obrador's top aides didn't really confirm the donations, and U.S. officials later ordered the politically sensitive case closed. □

Myanmar's resistance forces suggest terms for the military's eventual handover of power

BANGKOK (AP) — Myanmar's leading resistance group and allied ethnic armed groups battling the military government on Wednesday released a political road map to ending military rule and enabling a peaceful transition of power, saying they were open to peace talks with the army if it accepted their terms.

The joint statement was released a day ahead of the third anniversary of the army's seizure of power from the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi, and the same day the government extended a state of emergency for another six months. The emergency

decree empowers the military to assume all govern-



In this provided by The Myanmar Military True News Information Team on Jan. 31, 2024, Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing, chairman of State Administration Council, speaks during meeting with members the National Defense and Security Council in Naypyitaw, Myanmar.

Associated Press

ment functions.

The joint statement, posted on social media, was the clearest yet on the resistance movement's goals if it prevails in the civil war. The military government had no immediate reaction.

Myanmar's political crisis was unleashed when the military took power and used deadly force to suppress widespread peaceful protests, triggering armed resistance throughout the country that the army has been unable to quell.

The new statement is from the National Unity Government, or NUG, established by elected lawmakers who were barred from taking

their seats. It claims to be Myanmar's legitimate government.

The other signers are the Chin National Front, the Karen National Progressive Party and the Karen National Union, all in active combat against the military government.

The joint statement's objectives include terminating the military's involvement in politics, placing all armed forces under the command of an elected civilian government, promulgating a new constitution embodying federalism and democratic values, establishing a new federal democratic union and instituting a system of transitional justice. □

Papiamento words and phrases you may want to know!

(Oranjestad)—Aruba is a melting-pot of different nationalities, cultures and languages. Primarily for this reason, the average Aruban can understand and speak Dutch, English and Spanish relatively well. However, as much as we pride ourselves in being able to communicate with almost everyone, we cherish our native tongue Papiamento above all else. Want to learn some common words in our language? Here are a few basic words and phrases that can get you a hat tip from an Aruban.

When you arrive at the airport in Aruba, one of the first words in Papiamento you may encounter is "Bon bini." Bon bini in Papiamento means welcome, and is probably the most famous Papiamento word for tourists.

Hi! Bye!

To be fair, there is no unique way to say "hello" in Papiamento. At least, not officially. We often just use the English "hello" or "hey", or Dutch "hallo" to greet someone. We do however, always follow it up with "con bay?" or "con ta?" Con bay is a shortened version of "con ta bay?", which essentially means "how are you?"

The word "con" in Papiamento

means "how?" and is pronounced with a rounder "o" sounds, like in the English word "cone". "Ta bay" refers to how you are doing.

When we say goodbye, we use the word "ayo" (not like the Ayo Rock Formation, but also...kinda?). We may also use "te oro", which means "see you later".

Greetings during the day

Most, if not all, languages have different ways to greet according to the time of day, and Papiamento is no different. Since Papiamento is heavily influenced from Portuguese and Spanish, some of these phrases may look very familiar.

1. Bon dia is used in the morning, up to about noon. Bon dia essentially means good morning. The word "bon" means "good", and while "dia" does not directly mean "morning" in English, it is used often to refer to the morning time.
2. Bon tardi. In the afternoon to early evening hours, we use "bon tardi" to greet people, which means "good afternoon". "Tardi" actually comes from the word "atardi", which directly translates to "afternoon". However, the shortened "tardi" is used to keep



the rhythm on the phrase. And the same could be said for our last greeting of the day.

3. Bon nochi. You guessed it, "bon nochi" means "good night". Just like "tardi", "nochi" is actually the shortened version of the word "anochi".

Yes...no...maybe?

The affirmative and negative expression is very simple in Papiamento. Just like Spanish, our yeses are "si" and our no's are "no". Pretty easy right? If you want to gain some extra points from younger locals, you can also say "se", which is a more casual affirmative used

mostly by the younger generation. However, do note: some older generations may find this improper and not respectful, so keep that in mind.

Thanks man...

Lastly, a word that we can also say more often is "danki", which means literally "thank you". "Danki" is derived from the Dutch word "bedankt". Though we don't really have a translation for "I appreciate it" in English, we do use "masha danki" to convey the message. "Masha" means "a lot" or "very", so "masha danki" means "thank you very much". □

Lessons from our elders:

Plants and fruits for medicinal use (part 2)

(Oranjestad)—In last week's edition, we shared with our readers some medicinal use for plants and fruits, passed down from our elders through generations. This week, we present two more uses of fruits and plants for medicinal use.

Sweet potato

According to our elders, sweet potato is mostly useful for low

blood pressure. People who suffer from low blood pressure were advised to eat sweet potato 2 to 3 times a week. However, if you have high blood pressure, it is best not to eat too much sweet potato, as this raises blood pressure. Sweet potatoes are also great for people who work hard labor jobs, and it's been said to be aid blood circulation in the body, as well as help those with hemorrhoids or di-

arrhea.

Many of our elders opted to plant sweet potatoes themselves, mostly because of how easy it was to do so. Cut the end of a sweet potato let it sit in shallow water until it starts to sprout. Then you may plant it in the ground. Sweet potatoes need plenty of water to grow, especially in the first week in the ground. It was said that once you start to notice the ground crack underneath the flowers, it is time to harvest. This should happen around month 3.

Pomegranate

Pomegranates are also one of the easier fruits to plant and harvest. Originated from Persia, this plant can grow almost everywhere. In Aruba, there are many homes that have a tiny or big pomegranate tree. You may be wondering what the difference is between a small and big pomegranate tree, for which the answer is based on harvest time. Tiny trees produce

tinier pomegranates that can be harvested early on. Contrarily, big trees produce bigger pomegranates, but they need enough time to fully ripen before harvesting, otherwise you might end up with bitter seeds. Pomegranate trees are also very easy to plant. In essence, if you just throw the seeds on the ground, they could grow into a tree.

In terms of medicinal use, pomegranate skins are said to have a few benefits for our health. According to customs, pomegranate skin tea can help those that suffer from diarrhea. Dried pomegranate skin tea is also good for people who have worms. Pomegranate flowers can be boiled to make a drink and this can be used for irritated gums; just take a swig and let the tea sit in your mouth for a couple minutes. □

Source: Remedi i Kustumber di nos
Bieunan (Medicine and Customs of
our Elderly) by Dinah Veeris





Free Sangria
WITH THIS COUPON
ACROBATIC
LIVE SHOW
Wed & Fri - 7pm-9pm

SHOW TICKETS
\$35 p/p
www.rccava.com
Reservations:
+297 744 4059



Aruba's Bocas: home to the rarest fossil reefs on the planet!



(Oranjestad)—If you've been to the northern coast of Aruba already, you've probably noticed how the ground differs entirely from the sandy beaches on the southern part of the island. These hard surfaces, with sharp bumps and holes are actually fossilized coral reefs, of which its growth

and changes can be traced back to the last glacial period.

On May 30 2023, geoscientists, Dr. Patrick Boyden from the Marum research faculty at the University of Bremen, Prof. dr. Alessio Rovere from the Ca' Foscari University of Venice and

Prof. dr. Gianfranco Scicchitano, from the University of Bari Aldo Moro, presented their research on these fossilized coral reefs at the University of Aruba. Their focus for their research included studying the health and formation patterns of these coral reefs, and to investigate how these reefs

have responded and can respond to fluctuating sea levels or extreme weather, like hurricanes and tsunamis.

Through underwater and land surveillance, and 3D models of the reefs, they were able to narrow down when these formations started to take place. They were also able to track the fluctuation of sea levels during the past hundred or even thousands of years, and the effects that this fluctuation has had on the coral reefs of the windward side of Aruba.

These findings can certainly put things into perspective. The ground on which we have walked many times in the northern part of the island hold such rich history, history that dates back to a time that most of us can-

not even imagine. As the scientists themselves have pointed out, these fossilized reefs on the windward side are truly an incredible and rare remnant of geological history, as they provide a clear view of how these reefs have formed.

This research is also important for the future of coral reefs on the island. By studying rising sea levels and climate impact on these coral reefs, we are able to take concrete action in protecting and preserving our coral reefs. So, if you are ever visiting one of the bocas or driving along the northern part of the island, please be conscious to help protect our natural historical remnant. Oh, and wear (coral-friendly) sunscreen! ☐

PSA from the Arikok National Park: How to behave when you see a "lora"

(Oranjestad)—The conservation of the Yellow-Shouldered Amazon, also known as the 'Lora,' relies on how we act as humans. We've seen many hikers who've encountered the 'Lora' in our protected nature areas and we can certainly imagine the pride and joy it brings to any Aruban. However, not everyone may know how to behave when encountering these clever and social birds. This guide is here to explain the behaviors that will most effectively help us in our efforts to conserve the 'Lora.' Please, don't just read but also follow these guidelines so we can ensure the survival of these birds for future generations.

No interfering, please

Please refrain from interfering with the "Lora". The Lora is a highly intelligent and social animal, perhaps slightly too friendly because they have gotten used to the rangers as they prepared for their reintroduction. However, it is our collective responsibility to help them adapt to the wild once again. Please play your part by not interfering (calling, provoking etc.) with the Lora. Simply enjoy their beauty from a safe distance.

Be respectful and keep cats and dogs away

Pets and strays such as cats and dogs are prone to attacking other animals, especially birds, as part of their natural instincts. Please make sure your pets

are kept inside of your yard or are kept on a leash when going out for a walk.

Do not feed them food or water

You may think that giving the any food or water is doing a good deed, but it actually does not contribute to them developing survival skills in the wild. By interfering with the survival instincts of wild animals, we are doing the opposite of helping. Therefore, please do not attempt to give the Loras food or water.

Capturing a Lora is against the law!

The biggest threat to the Lora before their extinction in 1947 was caused by human activities including poaching and killing of the



Lora. Let's work collectively to prevent this from happening again. So when you see the Lora, enjoy their

beauty from a distance and admire them as they flourish in the wild. ☐

Weekly Free Slot or Table Play for all qualified Club members.

50/30
Friday!

We're giving away
\$50 Free Slot Play
to lucky slot and table
game players **every**
30 minutes from
7pm to Midnight!

THE SHOPS AT ALHAMBRA CASINO

Aruba Tours & Adventures | Auntie Anne's Pretzels | Aruba Aloe
Behind The Mask | Juan Valdez Café | Baskin-Robbins
The Brownstone Ribs and Seafood | The Market | M8 Boutique
Fusion - Piano Wine & Cigar Bar | Shalom Body & Soul Spa
Hungry Piranha - Pizza, Wings & More | Twist of Flavors
The Lazy Lizard | Dunkin Donuts | Shalom Hair & Nails Bar
Magnet Perfume Jewelry & Cosmetics | Curated Lab

Alhambra
CASINO AND SHOPS

Open daily 10am to 3am | J.E. Irausquin Blvd #47 | 583.5000 | casinoalhambra.com

Play Responsibly. Visit www.gamblersanonymous.org if you or someone you know has a gambling problem.



Aruban legends: Frenchman's Pass

(Oranjestad)—If you ever plan on taking a group tour of the island, you may pass through the Frenchman's Pass in Balashi. The Frenchman's pass (known to locals as "Franse Pas") remains a mysterious—and spooky—road of which its legend is told from generation to generation.

The history of the Frenchman's pass—and how it got its name—dates back to the colonization era, when the French tried to colonize the island, but were met with an angry mob of indigenous settlers, refusing to give up their land. However, as the French were heavily equipped with fire arms, the indigenous settlers began to retreat, and hid away in nearby caves. The French colonizers tried to smoke them out of the caves, but the indigenous settlers ended up inhaling too much smoke and most died in those caves. From then on, this passage

was known as Frenchman's Pass, and there have been many accounts of spirits roaming the area of Spanish Lagoon.

There are many ghost stories surrounding this area, but one of the most famous one involves a lonely hitchhiker, trying to find a ride back home in the dark rainy night.

Sometime after trying to hitchhike, the man saw a car approaching, appearing almost ghost-like in the rain. However, since he needed a ride real bad, he didn't think twice and jumped in. But to his horror, he noticed that there was no driver in the front. Paralyzed with fear, he didn't dare to get out, and the car started to move.

When approaching a sharp turn, the hitch hiker braced for impact, but just when he thought the car might drive straight off the



road and crash, he saw a hand appear out the window and turn the wheel. For the next few turns, the hand appeared again. After having had enough, the man decided to jump out and he ran to Santa Cruz.

Arriving at a nearby bar, he ordered a drink and began to tell everyone about his experience. Everyone grew

quiet, because they realized he wasn't some drunk messing around; he was telling the truth.

Sometime later, two men walked into the bar and one of them noticed the hitchhiker. He called out to his buddy and said: "Look, there's the idiot who sat in our car when we were pushing it!"

French man's pass is one of the few sites on the island that keeps the locals on their toes. While most ghost stories may not have real grounds—or some may even be a set up story for a joke, this pass contributes a lot to our culture of folkloric story-telling. □

Source: visitaruba.com

Prohibited by law: leaving the island with seashells, white sand or corals



(Oranjestad)—Often times, the customs department at the airport intercepts many tourists leaving the island with seashells, white sand and/or corals as souvenirs.

Conforming to the international treaty of CITES and our local law which protects our Flora & Fauna, it is absolutely prohibited to take any seashell, sand and coral outside of Aruba. This is to protect our environment. The high number of seashells, coral and amount of sand

confiscated is very strange and it is suspected that our own locals are the ones selling these to the tourists, which is unacceptable.

Upon confiscation at the airport, you can also face a fine that they have to pay before leaving. This is surely not a pleasant experience for the tourist. This also leads to a negative reaction which can put our tourism in a negative light. Though we love to accommodate our visitors, let's all give nature the

respect it deserves by protecting our environment. Stop collecting seashells, white sand and corals from our shores and stop buying or accepting these from local sellers or companies.

We want our future generations and visitors to enjoy the beauty of our beaches, shells and corals in a sustainable way, without destroying or disrupting the Aruban ecosystem. Help us protect what is ours! □

Episode XCIX – 99 Easter Edition

Nowadays, Easter is a business event and a religious holiday, marked by high sales of greeting cards and crafts, candy, chocolate eggs, and chocolate Easter bunnies among other gifts.

Rabbits are, in many cultures, known as keen breeders, so the arrival of baby bunnies in spring meadows was associated with birth and renewal. The exact origin of the Easter Bunny tradition is unknown, although some historians believe it arrived in America with German immigrants in the 1700's.

It's believed that eggs represented fertility and birth in certain pagan traditions that predates Christianity. Egg decorating may have become part of the Easter celebration in a nod to the religious significance of Easter, i.e., Jesus' resurrection or rebirth.

While some historians hold



that Easter is derived from albis, a Latin phrase that is pure for 'alba' or 'dawn'

that became eostarum in old German, a precursor to the English language of

today. St. Bede author of "Ecclesiastical History of the English People" maintains that the English word 'Easter' comes from Eostre who was the Anglo-Saxon goddess of spring and fertility.

Despite its significance as a Christian holy day, many of the traditions and symbols that play a key role in Easter observances actually have roots in pagan celebrations—particularly the pagan goddess Eostre. While in the Jewish religion the holiday of Passover or Pesach is celebrating exactly this that G have save the Hebrews from Farao giving them all the gift of freedom and a land of milk and honey. Several Protestant Christian denominations, including Lutherans and Quakers, have opted to formally abandon many Easter traditions, deeming them too pagan.

Easter foods are steeped in symbolism. An Easter dinner

of lamb also has historical roots, since a lamb was often used as a sacrificial animal in Jewish traditions, and lamb is frequently served during Passover. The phrase "lamb of God" is sometimes used to refer to Jesus and the sacrificial nature of his death.

Notably, Easter is also associated with the Jewish holiday of Passover, as well as the exodus of the Jews from Egypt, as described in the Old Testament. These links are clearly seen in the Last Supper, which occurred the night before Jesus' arrest and the sufferings Jesus endured following his arrest.

To get know more of Aruba's ancestors, history, culture, art and our island life, we highly recommend you to book your visit at Etnia Nativa. Known for its cultural encounters and educational purposes Etnia Nativa had caught the attention of curious participants for decades now. Mail us at etnianativa03@gmail.com, or send a message on our facebook page Etnia Nativa Aruba or WhatsApp us at +297 592 2702. □



Article by: Etnia Nativa

Whatsapp us +297 592 2702 and book your Aruban experience

Etnia Nativa is close to the high rise hotels



History of fishing in Aruba

ORANJESTAD — Fishing has been a family tradition for ages in Aruba. Our ancestors used to fish for a living. Even though nowadays you don't see them often we still have some passionate fishermen on the island that go out every day in search for fish to feed their families and serve our local market. One of these fisherman is Gregory Wernet.

The so-called Continental Bank between Aruba and the opposite coast reaches a depth of about 650 feet. The sea is very rich in fish here. Since the time of the indigenous native people fish and other sea creatures such as turtles, octopus squids, conch and many type of crustaceans have formed a means of subsistence for the native Aruban inhabitants. Especially along the west coast of the island where the fishing grounds are settlements of fishermen. Until the arrival of the oil-industry Aruban fishermen could supply Aruba's wants.

As a source of income, however, fishing did not amount too much. In the beginning of the 1900's approximately 160 people earn their living in this branch of this industry. Rancho, which stands for a shed, nowadays east Oranjestad, was the head

quarter and remains the fishermen's settlement. Savaneta, Noord, Santa Cruz all had their fishermen's villages. At a rough estimate there were about a hundred small fishing boats during that time.

The Arubans were mainly engaged in coastal fishing, using rowing-boats or small sailing-boats, and lines or dragnets and canisters in shallow water. When fishing with deep-sea lines just over the bottom of the sea the boat is kept in place by means of a piece of rock serving as an anchor. The two most important species of fish by far caught in this manner are the pargo or red snappers and a variety of groupers like the mero, jeanpao and the wowo di boyo.

Cruising off the coast the Aruban fisherman patiently waits for a fish willing to snap at the bait on the drag-line, in nets and traps. Veritable giants are sometimes caught. Barracudas weigh from 9 to 44 pounds and measure from 3 to almost 7 feet. The king-fish has a weight from 22 to 44 pounds; the moclat may tip the scales at 155, whilst garfish, having a length of nine feet, weigh over 132 pounds.

Most fish caught is used for their own consumption,



to feed their families and some are being sold in the market to local restaurants. Fisherman Gregory Wernet is a well-known fisherman from Santa Cruz. His father taught him fishing when he was a small child. Gregory has two sons, Jordan and Jordanny, which he taught fishing too, when they were only 3 years old and he takes them fishing with him. Fishing has been a family tradition for quite a long time and even his grandson Willvion of 7 years old is following his grandfather steps. This is the sixth generation of fishermen in their family.

They go deep sea fishing. There they catch red snap-

per, grouper and amberjack. They usually fish for 15 hours a day, but now due to the covid-19 measurements they go fishing from 5 in the morning until 8 o'clock at night or even sometimes from 8 at night till 5 in the morning. The day before they prepare all their fishing tools such as the Lines, lures, spears, and load their boat with fishing reels, batteries, fill the gasoline tank, lights and some food and beverages. For bait he uses sardines, squid and the small fish known in Aruba as piskechi. They have two boats they use for fishing. 'Virgen del Valle' which is parked at the pier by the Seaport and 'Padrot' which they have

at home.

The fish they catch they take home to their families and they also sell it to their clients. Gregory is proud to be a fisherman. It is a honest and humble job but with it he is able to feed his family even during hard times. It is a very dangerous job and you have to spend many hours on the sea, waiting patiently and risking your life while fighting a big fish and big waves but the adrenaline it brings with it but also just sitting there listening to the sound of the waves and enjoying the marvelous view that nature has to offer is all worth it.

Source: Etnia Nativa



CROSSWORD

By **THOMAS JOSEPH**

ACROSS

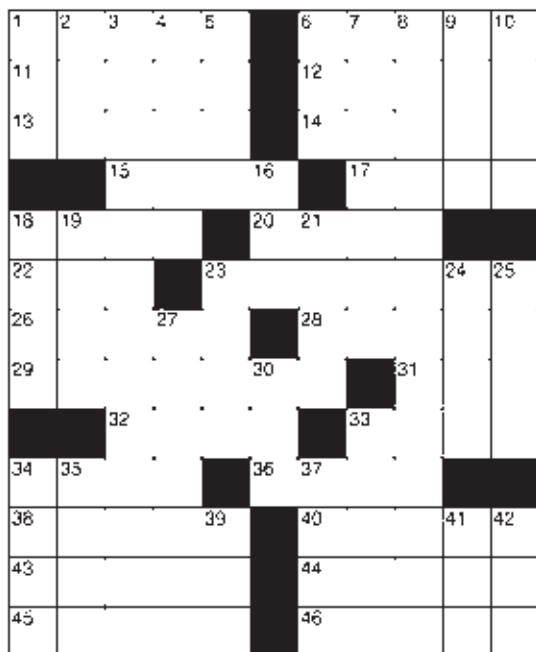
- 45 Wails
1 Metal fasteners
6 Some bow ties
11 Lucy's pal
12 Sore spots
13 "Keen!"
14 Guzzled
15 Poll numbers
17 Casino numbers
18 Illegally off base
20 Timber wolf
22 Despondent
23 Distant
26 Make blank
28 Make amends
29 Pivotal
31 Team supporter
32 Car scar
33 Picnic pests
34 Paul Bunyan's blue ox
36 Algeria neighbor
38 Wed in haste
40 Proper
43 Road work markers
44 Sneeze sound

DOWN

- 1 Egg layer
2 Had supper
3 Leigh Bardugo fantasy novel
4 Potpourri bit
5 Place in a TV lineup
6 Spot to jot
7 Circus performer
8 Deborah Harkness fantasy novel
9 Watch over
10 Invites
16 Imitating
18 Guinness of film
19 Had on
21 Test type
23 Plant with fronds
24 Med. sch. subject
25 Urges
27 Increase, as an incline
30 Cash dispenser
33 Tea party guest
34 "Loser" singer
35 Lotion additive
37 Mecca native
39 Road curve
41 Spicy
42 Gift from Santa



Yesterday's answer



2-2

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

2-2 CRYPTOQUOTE

R QJRDD VHDRHSH JGUJ DFSH

RQ UDD WFI ZHHX. R XFZ`J

PZFT U VHJJHK LHQQUNH JGUZ

JGUJ. — AUD LBBUKJZHW

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: IN FEBRUARY THERE IS EVERYTHING TO HOPE FOR AND NOTHING TO REGRET. — PATIENCE STRONG

AmEx tries to win over grumpy Delta customers with revamped SkyMiles credit cards

By **KEN SWEET**
AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — American Express rolled out several updates to its Delta SkyMiles credit cards Thursday that will give additional benefits to users, part of efforts to soothe sore Delta Air Lines customers who have considered abandoning the airline after last year's SkyMiles loyalty fiasco. The updates, however, will come with a higher annual fee, which AmEx says it believes the new benefits will more than pay for. New York-based AmEx is adding \$200 flight credits to the cards after a certain amount of spending, \$120 to \$240 in restaurant credits at restaurants booked with Resy, as well as \$120 to \$240 in credits to use on rideshare apps like Lyft and Uber. Higher-end cards



A direct mail advertisement for American Express is shown in Miami, Oct. 29, 2019.

Associated Press

will also get \$2,500 in "medallion qualifying dollars" that will get users closer to reaching elite status on the airline. Additionally, Delta cardholders will now be able

to use companion certificates on a broader array of flights, including to Hawaii, Alaska, Mexico, the Caribbean and Central America, instead of just the continental U.S. □

Peloton shares hit all-time low after connected fitness company posts another loss, lowers guidance



A Peloton logo is seen on the company's stationary bicycle on Nov. 19, 2019, in San Francisco, Calif.

Associated Press

By **MATT OTT**
AP Business Writer

Peloton sank to its lowest price on record Thursday after it reported another loss and gave investors a lukewarm forecast as the connected exercise company continues to struggle following its pandemic hot streak.

Sales fell to \$744 million in the second quarter, which company executives consider its most important quarter.

That amounts to a 6% decline from a year ago and a whopping 34% fall from two years ago. New York-based Peloton lost 54 cents per share in the period and hasn't posted a quarterly per-share profit in three years.

Peloton is projecting fourth-quarter revenue between \$700 and \$725 million, below analyst forecasts of \$750 million. □

Honey Dolls
MASSAGE AND ESCORT SERVICE
Beautiful Latin Girls
Pick-up & Delivery
Serving Men - Couple - Women - All Genders
📞 **+297 565-9535**
🕒 **24/7**
🌐 **WWW.PLEASUREINARUBA.COM**

Hungry sea otters are helping save California's marshlands from erosion

By CHRISTINA LARSON
AP Science Writer
WASHINGTON (AP) — The return of sea otters and their voracious appetites has helped rescue a section of California marshland, a new study shows. Sea otters eat constantly and one of their favorite snacks is the striped shore crab. These crabs dig burrows and also nibble away roots of the marsh grass pickleweed that holds dirt in place. Left unchecked, the crabs turn the marsh banks "into Swiss cheese," which can collapse when big waves or storms hit, said Brent Hughes, a Sonoma State University marine ecologist and co-author of the new study published Wednesday in the journal Nature. Researchers found that the return of the crab-eating sea otters to a tidal estuary near Monterey, California, helped curb erosion. "They don't completely reverse erosion, but slow it down to natural levels," said Hughes.

For many years, there weren't any sea otters in Elkhorn Slough. The 19th century fur trade decimated their global population which once stretched from Alaska to California, as well as into Russia and Japan. At one point, as few as 2,000 animals remained, mostly in Alaska. Hunting bans and habitat restoration efforts helped sea otters recover some of their former range. The first returnees were spotted in Elkhorn Slough in 1984. The Monterey Bay Aquarium's program for raising and releasing orphaned sea otters also boosted the estuary's population. For the new study, researchers analyzed historic erosion rates dating back to the 1930s to assess the impact of sea otters' return. They also set up fenced areas to keep otters away from some creek sections for three years those creek banks eroded much faster.



In this photo taken Monday, March 26, 2018, a pair of sea otters are seen at the Monterey Bay Aquarium in Monterey, Calif.

Past studies about the return of top predators to various habitats most famously, the reintroduction of gray wolves to Yellowstone National Park show how such species maintain ecosystem stability. Wolves curbed the number of elk and moose that ate saplings and slowed riverbank erosion. Many past studies relied on observations, but the design of the latest research left no doubt as to the sea

otters' impact, said Johan Eklöf, a Stockholm University marine biologist who was not involved in the new study. Other research has shown that sea otters help help forests regrow by controlling the number of sea urchins that munch kelp. Sea otters "are amazing finders and eaters," said Brian Silliman, a Duke University coastal ecologist and co-author of the latest study. □

Associated Press



Editor
Caribbean Speed Printers N.V.
Aruba Bank N.V. Acc. #332668
Caribbean Mercantile Bank N.V.
Acc. #23951903
RBC Royal Bank Acc. #1330772

Editors

Pilar Flores
Richard Brooks
Angenette Figuero

Sales

Mark Gomes
Sulaika Croes

Classifieds

classified@cspnv.com

Distribution and Collection

accounting@bondia.com

Social / Website

Juan Luis Pinto

Weststraat 22
T: 582-7800
E: news@arubatoday.com
W: www.arubatoday.com
@arubatoday



HEALTH

DOCTOR ON DUTY

Oranjestad

Hospital 7:00 pm / 10:00pm
Tel. 527 4000

San Nicolas

Imsan 24 hours
Tel. 524 8833

PHARMACY ON DUTY

Oranjestad:

Central : Tel. 585 1965
Aloe: Tel. 584 4606

Women in Difficulties

OTHER

Dental Clinic 587 9850
Blood Bank Aruba 587 0002
Urgent Care 586 0448
Walk-In Doctor's Clinic
+297 588 0539

EMERGENCY

Police	100
Oranjestad	527 3140
Noord	527 3200
Sta. Cruz	527 2900
San Nicolas	584 5000
Police Tipline	11141
Ambulancia	911
Fire Dept.	115
Red Cross	582 2219

TAXI SERVICES

Taxi Tas	587 5900
Prof. Taxi	588 0035
Taxi D.T.S.	587 2300
Taxi Serv. Aruba	583 3232
A1 Taxi Serv.	280 2828

TRAVEL INFO

Aruba Airport	524 2424
American Airlines	582 2700
Avianca	588 0059
Jet Blue	588 2244
Surinam	582 7896

AID FOUNDATIONS

FAVI- Visually Impaired
Tel. 582 5051

Alcoholics Anonymous
Tel. 736 2952

Narcotics Anonymous
Tel. 583 8989

Fundacion Contra Violencia
Relacional Tel. 583 5400

Centre for Diabetes
Tel. 524 8888

Child Abuse Prevention
Tel. 582 4433

Quota Club Tel. 525 2672

General Info

Phone Directory Tel. 118

Like us on
Facebook



facebook.com/arubatoday/

Songs by Taylor Swift, Drake and more are starting to disappear from TikTok. Here's why

By **WYATTE GRANTHAM-PHILIPS**

AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — TikTok may look (or sound) a little different when you scroll through the app going forward.

Earlier this week, Universal Music Group which represents big-name artists like Taylor Swift, Bad Bunny and Drake said that it would no longer allow its music on TikTok following the Wednesday expiration of a licensing deal between the two companies.

Now, the takedown of UMG-related music has begun, ByteDance-owned TikTok confirmed to The Associated Press. As of early Thursday, a vast roster of popular songs had disappeared from the social media platform's library.

The complete removal of UMG-licensed music might not be immediate but chances are, avid TikTokers are already seeing the effects. Here's a rundown of where things stand.

WHAT MUSIC IS GETTING REMOVED FROM TIKTOK?

The songs getting pulled from TikTok are those that are licensed by UMG which carries an enormous reach across the music industry and, consequently, our digital diet today.

"Universal Music Group is literally the largest record label... in the history of the music industry," said Andrew Mall, an associate professor of music at Northeastern University. An "uncountable number of tracks and sounds" would be impacted on TikTok, he added, significantly limiting options for creators.

TikTok users signing on Thursday will see that they are no longer able to search for many popular songs including music from Ariana Grande, Justin Bieber, Olivia Rodrigo and more under the "sounds" tab.

In addition to users no longer having the option of adding these songs to next dance craze and other trending content, past videos featuring UMG-



Drake appears at the Billboard Music Awards in Los Angeles on May 23, 2021.

Associated Press

licensed music will also be scrubbed. According to a UMG spokesperson, whether these existing videos are muted or taken down entirely will be up to TikTok.

Artists will also not be able to post the audio of their UMG-licensed songs on TikTok. If the music has a UMG license, it should be muted, the spokesperson said noting the company will protect its copyrights.

Tour clips of artists could also be affected, if those songs are represented by UMG, a person familiar with the matter told The Associated Press. This can become tricky if there are multiple songwriters, as recordings from other labels could also be affected, the person added.

Complete removal will likely be a process, so it may take a few days for TikTokers see the full effects. It's also important to note that music licensing is a complicated business and artists often have different songs that move through different labels. While a singer's UMG tracks will be removed, songs licensed exclusively with other music giants (like Warner and Sony-owned labels, for example) shouldn't be im-

pacted.

HOW DID WE GET HERE?

The expiration of licensing between UMG and TikTok arrived after the two companies were unable to reach a new agreement and soon shared heated exchanges.

In a Tuesday letter addressed to artists and songwriters, UMG said that it had been pressing TikTok on three issues: "appropriate compensation for our artists and songwriters, protecting human artists from the harmful effects of AI, and online safety for TikTok's users."

UMG said that TikTok proposed paying its artists and songwriters at a rate that's a fraction of the rate that other major social platforms pay, adding that TikTok makes up only about 1% of its total revenue. The music giant also took issue with TikTok's promotion of AI music creation which UMG says poses risks to human artists and the platform's record with what it says is hate speech, bigotry, bullying and harassment.

TikTok pushed back against claims by UMG, saying that it has reached "artist-first" agreements with every other label and publisher.

"It is sad and disappointing that Universal Music Group has put their own greed above the interests of their artists and songwriters," TikTok said.

WILL IT LAST?

Despite the licensing deal's expiration, experts note that we're still a moment of negotiation between UMG and TikTok and it probably won't last forever.

"We've seen this movie before. It's a wonderful, theatrical stand-off between two very major corporations... who are wanting to assert their authority on the landscape," said former president of UMG's Virgin EMI Records Ted Cocker, who now runs music advisory company called Musel Music Management. Users will likely find ways to adjust in the meantime, Cocker added, but he and others doubt that such a standoff will last long noting that a partnership between UMG and TikTok is significantly beneficial to both parties. Historically speaking, Mall said, gaps for other licensing agreements in the 21st century's digital era have typically lasted just a day to up to a few months.

There will also likely be add-

ed pressure from TikTok creators, artists and their fans.

"This is a platform that's really important for artists," said Alexandra J. Roberts, a professor of law and media at Northeastern University. "It might not affect established artists as much, but some of them are going to lose revenue streams. And I think we're going to see frustrated fans, right? Users who don't understand or are angry about the fact that they can't use or access or engage with some artists' work."

Representatives for several artists with UMG-licensed music including Taylor Swift, Bad Bunny, SZA, Drake, Ariana Grande and Billie Eilish did not immediately respond to The Associated Press' requests for comment.

Mall stressed the overall consequences of pulling music from social media platforms like TikTok particularly for younger developing artists. In this situation, UMG's revenue mostly comes from well-known artists who will probably be "just fine" if their music is no longer on TikTok, he said, but "smaller labels, smaller artists (couldn't) afford to do something like this."

Content creators and marketing experts are already preparing to pivot as needed. Jessica Henig, founder and CEO of music marketing firm Unlocked Branding who is works on campaigns involving UMG-licensed music, said it's not ideal, but that her team has grown accustomed to working through delays across the social media landscape.

Still, Henig, who previously headed influencer marketing at Virgin EMI, said time will tell.

"If this is going to be a longevity thing, then we might have a different conversation," she said.

TikTok's standoff with Universal isn't the first time a recording label has gone head-to-head with a social media company over licensing terms. □

Patrick Mahomes and Brock Purdy are chasing greatness and the greatest in Tom Brady and Joe Montana

By **ROB MAADDI**
AP Pro Football Writer

Patrick Mahomes is chasing Tom Brady. Brock Purdy is playing in the shadow of Joe Montana.

Winning the Super Bowl would be another major step for either quarterback. Mahomes and the Kansas City Chiefs seek to become the first team in 19 years to win back-to-back Super Bowls when they take on Purdy and the San Francisco 49ers in Las Vegas on Feb. 11.

For Mahomes, it's an opportunity to win his third NFL championship in his sixth full season as a starter at age 28. Brady won his third of seven Super Bowl rings in his fourth season as a starter at age 27.

For Purdy, it's a chance to complete his journey from being the last player selected in the 2022 draft to leading a storied franchise to a record-tying sixth Super Bowl title. Only the Patriots and Steelers have won six.



Kansas City Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes (15) holds up the Lamar Hunt Trophy after the AFC Championship NFL football game against the Baltimore Ravens, Sunday, Jan. 28, 2024, in Baltimore. The Chiefs won 17-10.

Associated Press

If Mahomes is going to make a run at Brady's record, he has to win this one. These opportunities are rare.

The Chiefs had a difficult

path to get to this point and had to go on the road twice in the playoffs for the first time in the Mahomes' era. There's a reason why no team has repeated

since Brady led New England to two Super Bowl victories in a row in the 2003-04 seasons.

A third title in five years would solidify Kansas City's

claim to a dynasty. The Patriots won three in four years in the 2000s and they won three in five years in the 2010s.

"I think in dynasties, I always say you've got to win three," Mahomes said before the season. "Our job is to do whatever we can to win as many as we can, not have any regrets when we step off the field. I think if we keep the mentality we have, we can look back at the end of our career (and) then we can decide if we're a dynasty or not."

The Chiefs realize they have a unique talent in Mahomes, already a certainty for the Pro Football Hall of Fame. The two-time NFL and Super Bowl MVP has built an impressive resume and is working toward being in the GOAT conversation. "We see it every day, we don't take that for granted," coach Andy Reid said. "We respect the job that he does, and we appreciate it. □

Liberty bringing back core of last season's WNBA Finals run. Diggins-Smith signs with Storm

By **DOUG FEINBERG**
AP Basketball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The New York Liberty are bringing their core group back and trying to add another piece with prized free agent Nneka Ogumike while Seattle signed Skylar Diggins-Smith as WNBA free agency tipped off Thursday.

The Liberty, who made it to the WNBA Finals last season before losing to the Las Vegas Aces, met with Ogumike, according to a person familiar with the situation. The person spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because on-going negotiations were private. Ogumike watched the Nets-Suns game courtside on Wednesday night with Liberty stars Breanna Stewart and Betnijah Laney.

Ogumike has spent her entire career with the Los Angeles Sparks since getting drafted No. 1 by the team in 2012, but said she was going to play somewhere else this season.

New York assigned a

franchise tag to Stewart a few weeks ago and is set to bring back free agent center Jonquel Jones, according to a person familiar with the deal. That person spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity because no



Team Stewart's Skylar Diggins-Smith, center, drives to the basket against Team Wilson's Candace Parker, left, and Sylvia Fowles during the first half of a WNBA All-Star basketball game in Chicago, Sunday, July 10, 2022.

Associated Press

announcement has been made on her signing.


ESPN was the first to report on Ogumike and Jones. Diggins-Smith returns to the league after giving birth to her second child and sitting out last season. The six-time All-Star, who last played with the Phoenix Mercury, has averaged 16.7 points and 4.9 rebounds in her career and reunites with fellow Notre Dame guard Jewell Loyd.

"Joining the Seattle Storm is the ideal next step in my basketball journey. The organization's dedication to its players and the progression of the league is commendable," Diggins-Smith said. "I'm laser-focused for the upcoming season. Stepping onto the court alongside Jewell, benefiting from the leadership of Noelle Quinn and feeling the energy

of the Seattle Storm fans is a combination that I am confident will lead to success." Other moves made on the first day of free agency included Dallas resigning Satou Sabally and Kalani Brown. Sabally, who was a restricted free agent, averaged career highs in points (18.6), rebounds (8.1) and assists (4.4) last season. Brown is coming off a career-year where she averaged 7.8 points and 4.5 rebounds. The Wings return virtually their entire team that lost in the WNBA semifinals to the Las Vegas Aces.

The two-time defending champion Aces brought back free agents Kiah Stokes and Sydney Colson. They also signed free agent Megan Gustafson.

Courtney Williams and Alanna Smith signed with the Minnesota Lynx. □



14TH FEBRUARY, 2024


Accumulate Tickets Between
February 11 - 14, 2024
20 Points - 1 Ticket
Claim Tickets until 8PM on February 14
Raffle - 9PM

3 Winners X \$50 Free Play

2 Winners X \$75 Free Play

**1 Winner X \$100 CASH +
Breakfast for 2**

**1 Winner X \$200 CASH +
Dinner for 2**



islandgaming

+297 2804000

J.E. Irausquin Blvd 83, Noord at Barcelo Aruba

FREE PARKING

World Aquatics Championships begin in Doha, but many top swimmers are staying home

By **PAUL NEWBERRY**
AP National Writer

With all eyes on the Paris Olympics, the World Aquatics Championships feel more like a nuisance than the second-most important event on the swimming calendar.

Given the unusual timing a lingering fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic many of the biggest names have decided to skip the meet in Doha, Qatar.

"I don't really care, to be honest," American breaststroke star Lilly King said. "It's not that big a deal for me."

The biennial world championships which also feature diving, water polo, artistic swimming, open water and high diving are usually held in odd-numbered years to avoid conflicting with the Olympics.

But the pandemic threw the schedule all of whack, beginning with the Tokyo Olympics being postponed until 2021.

That forced World Aquatics, the international governing body, to push back its championships scheduled for Fukuoka from '21 to '22.

With efforts to combat COVID-19 still a top priority, Japanese officials weren't willing to hold the meet a year later, either. A replacement was hastily scheduled in Budapest, while the Fukuoka championships were delayed again to 2023 the slot that was supposed to go to Qatar, the first Middle East nation to host the worlds.

So, the Doha meet was squeezed into the schedule less than six months ahead of the Paris Games, the first time the champion-



Katie Ledecky competes in the women's 800-meter freestyle final at the World Swimming Championships in Fukuoka, Japan, Saturday, July 29, 2023.

ships which began in 1973 are being held in the same calendar year as the Olympics.

The 17-day competition begins Friday with a pair of diving events.

The swimming days are set for the back half of the meet, but most of the world's top nations are sending what amounts to their B-teams.

For the powerhouse Americans, that means no Katie Ledecky, no Caeleb Dressel, no Ryan Murphy. Australia, which won a leading 13 swimming gold medals last summer in Fukuoka, won't have Kaylee McKeown, Ariarne Titmus or Molli O'Callaghan.

French star Léon Marchand, who has drawn comparisons to Michael Phelps, is sitting this one out, too. Ditto for Canadian prodigy Summer McIntosh, along with Chinese stalwarts Qin

Haiyang and Zhang Yufei. Of the 22 individual swimming gold medalists at last summer's world championships, only seven are entered for Doha. King, a five-time Olympic medalist who captured 11 golds and two silvers at the last three world championships, never seriously considered trying to add to her haul.

She is focused solely on being at her best for the U.S. Olympic trials in June and, of course, the biggest meet of all in Paris.

"I don't want to find out that three eight-day meets in six months is too many on Day 5 of the Olympics," King said. "But for everyone going, I hope they have fun."

Jack Alexy, who emerged in Fukuoka as one of America's rising sprint stars, decided to concentrate on the NCAA championships

in March.

Next to a successful Olympics, his biggest goal this year is helping Cal win its third straight men's national championship.

"I think bypassing the 2024 worlds and focusing on NCAAAs and this summer will help put me and my team in the best position," Alexy said, adding that the worlds is "just too much racing in six months."

While the U.S. and Australia are sending scaled-back teams, the meet in Doha will feature some compelling storylines.

The British team, for example, picked a squad that included nine medalists from Fukuoka, as well as world-record holder Adam Peaty. "This is a great racing opportunity on the world stage and will be a serious test of our swimmers' preparations and work over the winter months as they will still be in

heavy training throughout the meet," said Chris Spice, performance director for British Swimming.

After an extended break to deal with mental health issues, Peaty is eager to regain his status as the sport's most dominant breastroker.

American Nic Fink, who grabbed a pair of individual silver medals in Fukuoka, looks forward to racing the British star. In fact, all three Olympic medalists from the 100-meter butterfly in Tokyo are set to compete in Doha.

"Not everyone's going to be there, but it will be pretty competitive," Fink said. "That's kind of why I agreed to go. I had a feeling there was still going to be some awesome racing."

Kate Douglass is the only American individual gold medalist from Fukuoka who will be defending her title. With so many big names sitting out, the 22-year-old has a chance to lead a youthful U.S. team.

"It'll be a good group of young swimmers," said Douglass, who won the 200-meter individual medley last summer. "It'll be fun to kind of be a leader in that group, be one of the older ones. I think that will be a good experience for me."

DIVING

China, this sport's longtime superpower, has entered many of the same athletes who hoarded 12 of 13 golds and 19 medals overall in Fukuoka.

Reigning individual world champions Wang Zongyuan, Chen Yiwen and Chen Yuxi were all scheduled to dive in Doha. □